

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 have been canceled. Claims 21 and 25 have amended. Claims 21-25 are now pending for the Examiner's consideration.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the pending claims in light of the forgoing amendments the following remarks.

Rejection based on 35 USC §102(a)

Claims 1-4, 6-9, 21 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) over Abrams et. al. for the reasons set forth on pages 2-3 of the Office Action. Claims 1-4, 6-9 have been cancelled. Applicants note that Abrams et. al. was published in May 2003. The current application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No.60/426386, which was filed November 15, 2002.

Applicants therefore believe Abrams et. al. does not qualify as a 102(a) reference and request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Rejection based on 35 USC §103(a)

Claims 1-10, 17 and 21-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Abrams et. al. in view of Tang et al. and Goodman and Gilman for the reasons set forth on pages 3-6 of the Office Action. Claims 1-10 and 17 have been cancelled. Similarly as noted by Applicants above, Abrams et. al. does not qualify as a 103(a) reference. Applicants therefore request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In light of the preceding remarks, Applicants believe that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Applicants request that a Notice of Allowance be issued timely. If the above remarks are not to the satisfaction of the Examiner, Applicants invite the Examiner to contact the undersigned. If any fees other than those submitted herewith are due in connection with this response, including the fee for any required extension of time (for which Applicant hereby petitions), please charge such fees to Deposit Account No. 16-1445.

Respectfully submitted,

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